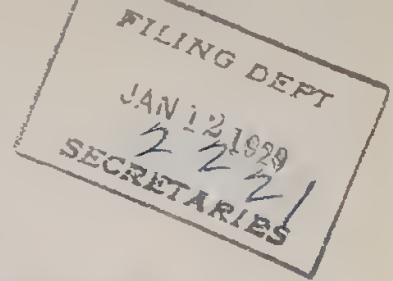


To	Rev. Lewis S. Mudge and Miss Margaret E. Hodge	Jan. 11, 1929
From	Mrs. Fred S. Bennett	Jan. 29, 1929
"	Eliot H. Moore	June 7, 1929
"	Eliot H. Moore	July 4, 1929

To	Rev. Lewis S. Mudge and Miss Margaret E. Hodge	Jan. 11, 1929
From	Mrs. Fred S. Bennett	Jan. 29, 1929
"	Eliot H. Moore	June 7, 1929
"	Eliot H. Moore	July 4, 1929



January 11th, 1929.
Dictated Jan. 10th.

Rev. Lewis S. Hodge, D.D.,
Miss Margaret E. Hodge,
Mrs. F. S. Bennett,

Status of Women

Dear Friends:

Perhaps I have been remiss in not trying to put in shape earlier the report which our Committee should make to the General Council at its next meeting in March. If you approve, I will draft a report along the following lines:

I. A report of our conference accompanied to each member of the General Council by a copy of Mr. Barraclough's mimeographed notes.

II. A brief summary of the literature which had been sent to each member of the Council and General conference beforehand with the request that the General Council should read all this literature, including Miss Boyden's book, before the March meeting.

III. An account of the presentation of the question of the admission of women to the eldership and to the diaconate by Dr. Hall Young's committee in blank and of the results in the action in the Presbyteries.

IV. A brief statement of the alleged scriptural ground for the exclusion of women from the eldership, with a reference to the book of Dr. George P. Hays which Dr. Hodge is seeking to have republished and which is, I think, a convincing and conclusive answer to these objections.

V. A definite proposition to the General Council for the re-submission of the question of the admission of women to the eldership of the Presbyteries, and the additional proposition that we should submit the question of their ordination as evangelists whenever Presbyteries believe that it is desirable.

Would you approve a report drafted along these lines and do you think that in the last section we would be going either too far, or not far enough?

Very cordially yours,

RES/MEV

(Mrs) Fred S. Bennett

Board of National Missions
of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

156 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

RECEIVED

JAN 30 1929

DIVISION OF
GENERAL PROMOTION

Mr. Speer

January 29, 1929

Dr. Robert E. Speer
156 Fifth Avenue
New York City

Dear Dr. Speer:-

In answering your letter of January 11th, which outlines a possible report to General Council on "Causes of Unrest Among the Women of the Church", I am handicapped by the fact that I was not present at the Conference of November 22nd last. I have, however, talked with a number of the women who participated in that conference, have read all material sent to the members of it, and have also given consideration to some present indications that concern the women in the Presbyterian church and the organizations fostered by them. It is after hearing and reading much on this matter of "Unrest" that I again approach the next step, the one that will be much more difficult than those taken. An historical resumé is simple - a constructive future plan is hard to evolve. I am convinced that along some lines there must be clear thinking and aggressive planning if questions raised are to be answered, and answered in such a way as to conserve the work of the past and make it more effective for the future.

In preparing the paper on "Causes of Unrest" I based it on the paragraph from the Report of the Special Commission of Fifteen of 1926 and 1927, which paragraph led General Council to ask Miss Hodge and myself to prepare a paper: viz.

"There are many women in the Church who are not
satisfied with present administrative conditions.

Some of them fear the loss of the organizations

Mrs. Bennett to Dr. Speer
Jan. 29, 1929

-2-

through which they have worked so long; some regard as unjust the lack of representation of women in the church."

Here there was no special emphasis on the ecclesiastical relationship - it was implied, but the organizational work of the women seemed to be the part uppermost in the thoughts of the members of the Commission. Following this our little pamphlet tried to hold the two parts as at least of equal importance for discussion, and the five topics suggested for the Conference of November 22nd last recognized this same need of clarification of woman's status in more than one phase.

In view of the above may I suggest that the items you enumerate for inclusion in our report seem to exclude one whole side of woman's place in the church, a part that will not be clarified by her eligibility to the eldership - unless it is expected that having been placed on an equal basis with men in the church she shall cease to exercise separate administrative and organizational services. May I further say - and I say it with some hesitancy - but I feel I must honestly voice my own convictions, that while I, II, and III in the draft of the proposed report are satisfactory, I am not in full accord with the other two.

The book referred to in IV was, I understand, printed about forty years ago. I wonder if it would be as influential in the thinking of the younger men as a brief statement from a more modern source. Some of the English papers incorporated in Dr. Mudge's statement would seem to me more valuable as showing present-day thinking and tendencies. I wonder how many would read a book on the subject. This I ask without knowing the size of the book of Dr. Hays, or its scope.

My reply to V is expressed in the pamphlet, page 27 -

"Few(women) wish any specific opportunity. What they do wish is the removal of ~~in~~hibitions." It may seem that V answers this desire, but to many of us the manner of approach to the matter makes a real difference and we would wish, for example, that Chapter XIII of our Form of Government, Section II, be amended by omitting the last clause, "provided, that men shall be eligible to election to the office of ruling elder, and that men and women shall be eligible to election to the office of deacon", and that other discriminatory clauses be omitted elsewhere in the Form of Government, recognizing women as church members with all the rights and privileges that have in the past been given to men. I do not think there would be any overwhelming seizing of positions by women, but opportunity would be given for the gradual education of the church to the opportunities open to women and to the church, and both would, I think, soon adjust themselves to these opportunities. The question being opened I am not willing to have an overture asking that women be admitted to the eldership: I ask that expediency be set aside and the principle be faced by the church. I quote Miss Royden, p. 249, and rest my case on her statement. If it be right that women have equal place with men in the church, then it should be given to them: if it is not right, then let them not be given the eldership. Miss Royden writes:

"It is the whole of my difference with most of the opponents of the further development of women's ministries in the Church that to me it seems a question of vital and fundamental principle - to them a matter chiefly of expediency. As in the beginning with Paul

so today, the duties, the liberties, and the sphere of women are too often decided with a view to practical expediency, and the question asked whether the Churches 'need' them or not; whether their coming into the ministry might not create practical difficulties; whether it would promote or postpone reunion; and so on. But we claim that the question cannot be decided in this way. We claim that it is a question of principle, and that expediency must follow, not lead, when a principle is involved. If on a question of principle we are right, then our claim must be granted, and it will be found expedient to grant it. Let those who oppose us equally on grounds of principle agree with us at least in this - that on questions of principle nothing need or ought to be considered but whether they are the principles of God, divinely ordained, and proclaimed by Christ our Master and our Lord."

One reads the above: then one reads from the Resolutions of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England:
"The Assembly declares that there is no barrier in principle to the admission of women to the Ministry.....

"The Assembly has affirmed that there is no barrier in principle to the admission of women to the ministry. The point remaining to be considered is this: Are there any considerations of a practical nature which

make it inadvisable to open the ranks of our ministry to women?

- " (a) It is inconsistent with the uniform tradition of the Christian Church.
- " (b) Another objection, less general in its application, is the strain which might be laid on the relationship between different branches of the Presbyterian Church which extend to each other 'mutual eligibility' should one of them introduce women into their ministry.
- " (c) More serious is the opposition which is based on differences between men and women, which are felt by some to be fundamental to this issue. This aspect of the question is attached sometimes (1) to the exclusive claims of the home on women; and sometimes (2) to inherent dangers connected with their intimate exercise of the functions of a ministry which includes both male and female members.
- " (d) Opposition has been offered to any proposal to include women in the regular ministry of the Church on the ground that the severe and unremitting demands made upon the modern pastor are such as women must often find impossible of fulfilment."

The Assembly could not agree as to the expediency of the action and the Overture to admit women to the Ministry was denied.

Personally I was not prepared to see this matter of status opened when General Council proposed it: it is opened and my conviction is that the fundamental rightness or wrongness of the matter must be faced, and action taken accordingly. Let the Church deny further "rights", or re-

Mrs. Bennett to Dr. Speer
Jan. 29, 1929

move restrictions and inhibitions that are based on sex. It is thus that I would like to see our Committee report to General Council.

I should perhaps add that in my own thinking each privilege accorded may bring increasing embarrassments unless the differences in privileges between the sex^{es} are all removed. A woman may, let us say, become an elder: are there any rights connected with the privileges of this office in the entering upon which there would be further obstacles?

Woman's position is so equivocal today, so constantly to be explained or interpreted that I am prepared to risk all on asking whether the Church is willing to accept them as members, as workers, without discrimination, allowing them to take their place in the course of the years in any positions for which they are fitted, and to which the church may call them. Let discriminations be obliterated and the future will care for itself.

I further feel that the Report of our Committee should enter upon the organizational matter which causes more unrest than does the ecclesiastical one. This seems especially imperative in view of (1) the overture of the Board of Christian Education "asking that the way be opened for larger cooperation on the part of the Board of Christian Education with the organized womanhood of the Church", which overture is to be considered at the March meeting of General Council, and (2) the formation of the National Commission of Protestant Church Women - see enclosed leaflet - which is an actual step toward active participation by church women through church organizations in national social and semi-political movements.

There is much uncertainty among the women owing to the confusion of appeal and the varying claims made upon them, owing to the single budget,

Mrs. Bennett to Dr. Speer
Jan. 29, 1929

owing to the formation of Women's Associations with enlarged programs and owing to the pressure of the Board of Christian Education. Unless some authoritative body meets these issues squarely as they relate to the missionary organization there will be a gradual disintegration of the morale of the societies with lessened gifts. The Board of Christian Education says it makes no appeal to the missionary organization, but it has a most subtle form of advertising through which it is educating the church to the injustice of its position. On the last cover page of the Presbyterian Advance of December 20, 1928, it says - "The Board of Christian Education depends entirely on receipts through the church budget; it has no auxiliary organization of women." The underscoring is mine.

I can think of but one logical way to meet this issue; in view of the fact that larger opportunities for women in the church are being considered I cannot think that General Council would wish to act on these matters without consulting with the women themselves, both as to the principles involved and as to a plan for the future. It was unfortunate that the meeting in Chicago could not have done more than touch on the principles involved - details must be worked over. Could it be recommended that General Council appoint a committee ~~p~~ a small one - of men and women to study these organizational matters and to report to that body in November next, and that meanwhile no answer be made to the overture of the Board of Christian Education and no action be taken affecting the status of women in their organizational or administrative work?

These are the two major issues that I desire to see noted in the report of our Committee, (1) the announcement of woman's right as a church member to full participation in the work and service of the church with no discriminating inhibitions; (2) a clarification of the organizational work

Mrs. Bennett to Dr. Spear
Jan. 29, 1929

of the women.

I am,

Very cordially yours,

(*Mrs. F. S.*)

W. Katherine Bennett

MKB:VH

Lewis S. Mudge

The Presbyterian Church in the United States of America

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

EXECUTIVE HEAD

REV. LEWIS S. MUDGE, D.D., LL.D.

STATED CLERK

GENERAL OFFICE

514 WITHERSPOON BUILDING

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

July 1, 1929.

JUL 7 - 1929

Dr. Robert E. Speer,
156 Fifth Ave.,
New York City.

My dear Bobby:

Enclosed please find copy of a paper entitled the
"Old Paths". You will be interested in the article which
it contains entitled "Corinthian Feminism and Its Modern
Revival".

Yours sincerely,

L. S. Mudge

Lewis S. Mudge
Stated Clerk

E. A. Murre

Anoka, June 7th '29
Dr. Robt. E. Speer
N. City

RECEIVED

JUN 10 1929

In accord with
your suggestion at the Syn-
assembly, I am writing you in
re the status of women in the
church. You spoke of sending
me a pamphlet on the subject
by a Dr. Hays, I believe
I want to be open minded
on this, as on all subjects,
but I can not see how any
fair exegesis of Paul in Cor.
v. 14 can warrant the ordi-
nation of women to any office.
The Lord Jesus and His
disciples are heralds of the resur-
rection and women were the faith-
ful supporters & devoted friends
of the Savior in His earthly life.

is they have been exercised, but
I see no signs of ordination
in the N.T. - not even in the case
of Phoebe of Cenchrea

Women will serve Christ
sweetly & devotedly without
any hope of, nor desire for, office
& when that is thrust upon
them it spoils them. Even

spoils some men. I will well

R.V. "I permit
me, I suffer not a woman
to teach, nor to have dominion over
to ~~such authority over~~

a man, but to be in quietness. For

Adam was first formed, then Eve,

& Adam was not beguiled, but the

woman being beguiled hath

fallen into ~~transgression~~ or ^{the} ~~the~~

again: "The head of every man is

Christ; & the head of the woman

is the church. The head of Christ is

God - an economical subordina-

tion, under God.

I receive not only inspiration but

knowledge of human nature

led the Abolition to write as he did.
I have seen enough myself
to know the danger of religious
emotions as related to sex.
I have gone among many in-
dividuals & churches in several
states, as Field Sec'y for three col-
leges & as Asst. Supt. of Missions
now in Minn. as well as pastor
of four churches & I have seen no
interest on the part of women in
regard to holding office, save on
the part of some quasi-official wor-
ers, usually connected with the
agencies of the Church.

I do not believe the Church as
a whole wants any change & I
believe this involves a matter
of doctrine, as well as of polity,
& so will require the assent of
2/3 of the Presbytery, which I
think will be denied.

Unless my firm convictions on
this matter can be rationally, &
above all, scripturally, overcome

I could not agree to such change.
I believe the Lord has made men
and women to be complementary
to one another - each having
their special places & functions
in their different sex assumes the
duties & character designed par-
ticularly for the other & opposi-
tes result.

It is true that "in Christ Jesus
there is neither male nor female"
but this, as I understand it,
refers to Salvation & growth in
grace - "a new creature or cre-
ation".

I find I am not alone in feeling
strongly about this matter & there is
a majority vote with a correct
attitude.

Asking you for so long pressing up
on your valuable time,

I remain,

Sincerely yours

Edw. H. Moore

² ⁴ ^{more}
Anoka, Minn. July 4th, 1929.

Dr. Robt. E. Beer,

N.Y. City.

Dear Dr. Beer: Thank you very much for your letter of 24th ult. & the printed let of Dr. Hays, which ^{no enclosure} I am returning. We read the letter very carefully & while I think he makes out as good a case as can be made from his standpoint I am not convinced. I never denied the propriety & value of many kinds of Christian work on the part of women, only their ordination & public teaching & ruling. I. S. & missionary labors, even testifying in prayer meetings (under some conditions) I would welcome, but I can see no scriptural authority for more than this, except in the instances of women prophets. Whenever it is clear that the Lord sends a "burden" upon a woman now a days to deliver to His people I will be silent.

To my mind there are some more
sequiturs in the Paper of Dr. Hays,
e.g. if only the Greek Churches were
to be enjoined vs. the Public & Official
leadership of Women why do the epis-
tles containing these Enjoinments
come down to us when evidently
two other epistles to the Corinthians
have been 'lost'? If these latter epis-
tles were not intended for the Church
universal, by divine Providence,
may we not argue, contra, that
the preservation of those we have
suggests universal application?

Another argument of his - bot. v. 30 & 31
top of v. 31 - is unconvincing.

The fact that Paul argues that the "Adam"
was first formed, then Eve, seems to
make his injunctions apply to the
whole human family.

Again he says (I Cor. XI:16): "But
if any man seem to be contentious
he have no such custom, neither
of churches of God" (not merely the
Greek churches, but all the churches,
that is, Rom. as well, where women
were not so secluded.

In cases of dire necessity, such as
St. Hays quotes where only women
Christians are present on a foreign
mission field, 'necessary exceptions
might be made. "Necessity knows
no law", but the exception only
crosses the rule.'

(Repeating what I wrote in a
previous letter I would say no
more honors good women 'more
than I'. I believe they are finer
china than men, but in this
particular, with its free-
dom (not to say license) of dress
& behavior I believe some of the
wise, loving, conservative injunc-
tions of the Apostle need to be
emphasized rather than deleted.

Again thanking you for your
courtesy ^{and} with deep affection
for you personally,

I remain,

Sincerely,

Edith H. Moore.